

LEXINGTON TREE COMMITTEE
Report to the Town of Lexington - December 2007

ROLE: To promote the preservation and protection of both public shade trees pursuant to General Law Chapter 87 and certain trees on portions of private property; to work in conjunction with the Tree Warden to regulate the removal and replacement of trees in certain circumstances; to promote the planting and protection of trees throughout the Town; to develop rules, regulations, tree inventory, manuals, and other data as stated in the Lexington Tree Bylaw for approval and promulgation by the Selectmen.

APPOINTED by the Board of Selectmen: Chair John Frey, Karen Longeteig, Gerald Paul, Markus Pinney, Anne Senning, Nell Walker, James Wood; Selectmen liaison Jeanne Krieger; Tree Warden David Pinsonneault. Susan Solomon, though no longer a member, is continuing to contribute her time and effort for Tree Committee initiatives.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- * **Tree Planting:** 60 new trees planted on public land in Town this year:

- 6 trees planted by contractor at the new town parking lot west of Grant Street between NSTAR and the Minuteman Bikeway; Red Maple, Linden, Sweet Gum and 2 Oaks in structural soil 3 feet deep under the traffic island one Sugar Maple in lawn area. 26 columnar arborvitaes planted as screen along Grant Street.

- 5 trees at the newly constructed brick sidewalk on Massachusetts Avenue from Waltham Street to Michelson's shoe store in structural soil 3 feet deep with surface and underground drain system (2 Silver Lindens and 3 Green Ash trees). These replaced 2 distressed Callery Pear trees and 2 good Pears. This planting method, if successful, may serve as a model for future sidewalk planting in our urban areas.

- 1 large Zelkova tree donated and planted in front of the school administration building (the white house) by Matt Foti.

- 10 trees planted at the High School (7 October Glory Red Maples in north parking lot, one Scarlet Oak at the Field House and 2 Tulip Trees in the Senior Quad. The latter 3 were funded by gifts from Selectman Peter Kelley and others via private fund-raising efforts of the PTSA Landscaping Subcommittee.

- 1 Another Heritage Birch tree planted by the DPW Forestry Division at Belfry Park along Clarke Street as part of the annual Arbor Day Ceremony, staged by the Civic Improvement Committee of the Lexington Field and Garden Club, who bought and distributed 500 White Spruce tree seedlings to participants, nursery school children and all kindergarteners in town.

- 1 Commemorative Tree: The fourth installation in the Tree Committee's Commemorative Tree Program was a Tulip Tree donated by Sandra Mayo and planted in Lincoln Park to commemorate Leon Mayo.

- 10 trees planted at various public grounds and right-of-way locations throughout Town.

The DPW Forestry Division removed 134 trees and pruned 58 trees in 2007.

- * **Tree Bylaw:** Continues to be very successful under David Pinsonneault's lead. Reviewed permit applications for tree removal on private land. Since October 1, 2001, a total of 539 sites have been visited: 428 sites have been closed out. 647 trees were approved for removal, of which 488 have been removed to date. As mitigation: 1542 new trees required to be planted; 1103 now planted.
- * **New Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Grant:** Developed and submitted a \$44,500 grant proposal to DCR to fund summer interns with the goal to complete Lexington's tree inventory in 2007 and to develop software which would speed data collecting and integrate it with the Town's GIS and CartèGraphe work order system. DCR cut back the amount to \$10,000 saying they were not willing to fund software development and that federal pass-through funds had been cut back. This gave us enough money for two summer interns and coordination with Urban Ecology Institute, who loaned us several hand-held computers.

- * **Tree Inventory:** This year, the Committee, the two talented interns, David Hattis and Max Horn, and volunteers inventoried 1,306 more trees with hand-held computers, bringing the total to 2717 trees inventoried since 2004, roughly 20% of Lexington's public trees. The interns modified the inventory software so that groves or thickets could be recorded simply, which will speed up the inventory taking. They also assisted the Engineering Dept. by flagging houses whose footprint had changed from those shown on original GIS maps. Max wrote an instruction document on how to use the hand-helds and another on how select data and make a map. David wrote a document with 56 steps on how to synchronize data from the hand-held into the laptop and taught the process to two Tree Committee members. David also wrote on how to extract data and make tables.
- * **Tree Nursery:** As a result of Jim Wood's initiative and with all permits and approvals in place from the Lexington Conservation Commission and the State DEP, the town tree nursery near Lower Vine Brook south of East Street broke ground April 28. To minimize planting time and disturbance to the area, no cultivation was done, a DPW auger dug the holes, and 120 ordered saplings were planted in special tree planting bags in the ground by Friends of Trees and other volunteers. About 10 smaller donated trees were also planted. Watering, with irrigation tubing donated by Guy Doran, was monitored all summer by neighbor Barbara Kent, a member of Friends of Trees Board.
- * **CPA Grant Application:** Initiated by Anne Senning, the Tree Committee submitted an application for a \$9,850 grant for Belfry Hill Tree Restoration based on 2006 tree inventory for 2008 Town Meeting approval.
- * **Tree Revolving Fund:** At the close of 2007, the balance was \$2,224.45.
- * **Tree City USA:** Award received again this year, the eighteenth Tree City USA Award for the Town.
- * **Commemorative Tree Fund.** Color brochure; explains the procedure for donating a commemorative tree to the town; available for all who wish to commemorate a person or an event, or just do a good deed. Brochures can be picked up at the Library, DPW Barn or from the publications rack outside the Clerk's office in the Town Office Building.
- * **Friends of Trees:** Initiated by the Tree Committee in the early months of 2007 and nurtured by Gerry Paul, the "Friends" has blossomed into a very productive ad hoc group; they gave yeomen's help on the tree farm installation, grant writing, coordination of Commemorative Tree Program, bittersweet eradication and other important projects. Jewel Kuljian's grant proposal to the Lexington Field and Garden Club produced \$1,500 for planting 6 new trees: 2 Yellowwood and one 'Centennial' Star Magnolia along Clarke Street, and 3 Sourwood trees along Meriam Street at the parking lot near the Bikeway.
- * **Community Outreach:**
 - Presented the Tree Nursery to the Selectmen at their public meeting 5/21/07.
 - “Under the Canopy: Nurturing Lexington's Tree Stock” article by Anne Senning in the Lexington's Colonial Times Magazine June/July 2007 Lexington's Tree Nursery.
 - Article on Lexington's Tree Nursery in the DCR's The Citizen Forester July 2007 No.116 newsletter.
 - “Scene and Herd” column by Mary Lou Touart in The Lexington Minuteman newspaper Aug 30 reported on Tree Committee topics including the DCR grant for tree inventory, summer intern work, the Tree Farm (Nursery), and the Commemorative Tree Program.
 - “Trees Count” article by Laurie Atwater in the Lexington's Colonial Times Magazine, August/September 2007, described in detail the summer tree inventory with interns Davis Hattis and Max Horn led by Anne Senning embellished with seven color photos.
 - Wrote letter to Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets Chairs Sen. Montigny and Rep. Flynn to strongly endorse H58, which called for transferring the Lexington portion of Lot 1 to DCR.

-Worked with Tom Brown of the LABBB program at Lexington High School conducting a Tree Inventory around the high school grounds. This provided a meaningful and instructive project for his students, who take pride in participating in a community-wide project.